

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3559

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 0246

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN

SUBJECT: PAK REACTION TO INDIAN CRITICISM

REF: NEW DELHI 17414, ET AL.

1. PAK REACTION TO SPATE OF CRITICISM BY GOI OFFICIALS
AND INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS LEADERS AT RECENTLY CONCLUDED
CHANDIGARH SESSION AND ELSEWHERE HAS GENERALLY BEEN RE-
STRAINED. MINISTER OF STATE AZIZ AHMED HAS SENT WHAT WE
HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND IS AN INOFFENSIVELY WORDED
LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN REMONSTRATING AGAINST
CHAVAN'S ACCUSATION THAT PAKISTAN HAD STARTED A "DANGEROUS
AND POISONOUS" CAMPAIGN ALLEGING THAT INDIAN TROOPS WERE
POISED AGAINST BANGLADESH, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICLY
RELEASED, NOR HAVE ANY OFFICIAL STATEMENTS BEEN ISSUED.
PRESS PLAY HAS BEEN MINIMAL TO MODERATE, AND PAPERS HAVE
GENERALLY REPORTED CRITICAL COMMENTS ON PAKISTAN IN
STRAIGHT FASHION WITHOUT INFLAMMATORY HEADLINES OR LEADS.
EDITORIALS HAVE ALSO BEEN MODERATE BY CUSTOMARY STANDARDS

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HERE.

2. DISCUSSING REMARKS MADE AT CHANDIGARH, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDI TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT TENTATIVE MINISTRY ANALYSIS WAS THAT THEY HAD BEEN PROMPTED BY NEED TO PLACATE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN INDIAN POLITICAL ARENA AND WOULD NOT HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS. PROSPECTS FOR ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THAT AREA OTHER THAN IN TRADE FIELD WERE IN ANY EVENT ALREADY DIM, HE SAID, NOTING THAT INDIANS HAD STILL NOT REPLIED TO FORMAL LETTER REITERATING GOP CIVIL AIR COMPROMISE FORMULA WHICH THEY HAVE NOW HAD FOR OVER A MONTH. GOP DID FEEL, NONETHELESS, THAT IT HAD TO REPLY TO CHAVAN'S CHANDIGARH SPEECH. AZIZ AHMED'S MILDLY COUCHED REJOINDER HAD ARGUED, ACCORDING TO MEHDI, THAT PAKS HAD BEEN IN NO POSITION TO CLAIM THAT INDIAN TROOPS WERE POISED AGAINST BD SINCE GOP HAD NO REPRESENTATIVE IN EITHER NEW DELHI OR DACCA TO SUPPLY SUCH INFORMATION. AZIZ HAD ALSO MAINTAINED THAT PAKS WERE WELL AWARE THAT ANY SUCH CAMPAIGN ON THEIR PART WOULD ONLY LEAD TO HARDENING OF INDIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD PAKISTAN, SOMETHING WHICH GOP WISHED TO AVOID.

3. MEHDI ALSO HINTED THAT WORD HAD GONE OUT TO PRESS THAT IT SHOULD PLAY INDIAN DEVELOPMENTS WITH RESTRAINT. MOST SIGNIFICANT EDITORIAL REACTION SO FAR HAS BEEN TO CRITICISM OF PAKISTAN FOR FOOTDRAGGING IN NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH INDIA ON BASIS OF SIMLA AGREEMENT. GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES EDITORIALIZED IN PAINED TONE THAT IN PURSUANCE OF SIMLA AGREEMENT, PAK LEADERS HAVE SAID NOTHING ABOUT THE INDIAN EMERGENCY, WHILE INDIANS HAD CRITICIZED PAKS. PRESIDENT AHMED'S SPEECH WAS THUS CHARACTERISTIC OF INDIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD PAKISTAN. TIMES CALLED THE MATTER SERIOUS IN THAT PRESIDENT AHMED'S ENDORSEMENT OF ANTI-PAKISTAN ALLEGATIONS BY OTHERS CONSTITUTES STATE POLICY. EDITORIAL LISTS NUMBER OF INSTANCES OF INDIAN PROCRASTINATION UNDER SIMLA ACCORD AND PINS BLAME ON INDIANS FOR SLOW PROGRESS TOWARDS NORMALIZATION. IT ENDS, HOWEVER, WITH HOPE THAT INDIAN CRITICISM MARKS ONLY A TEMPORARY PHASE IN POLICY OCCASIONED BY INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS. INDEPENDENT
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VERNACULAR NAWA-I-WAQT TAKES MUCH THE SAME LINE: EDITORIALIZING THAT INDIAN STATEMENTS RE: SIMLA ARE TYPICAL OF INDIANS FOR MALIGNING PAKISTAN TO HIDE THEIR OWN SHORTCOMINGS. PAKISTAN, PAPER SAYS, HAS CERTAINLY TRIED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS UNDER SIMLA WHILE INDIANS HAVE CREATED HURDLES AND ARE HESITANT TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN ON THE BASIS OF EQUAL FOOTING.

4. MORNING NEWS AND DAWN SEE MRS. GANDHI'S REFERENCES TO THREATS TO INDIAN SECURITY AS A CAUSE FOR PAK CONCERN. BOTH FEAR THAT SHE MAY ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY CONTINUATION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY BY ADOPTING COURSE OF ACTION THREATENING TO PAKISTAN. DAWN SAYS DECISIONS AT CHANDIGARH MAY RAISE DOUBTS IN PAKISTAN ABOUT FURTHER PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE SIMLA ACCORD.

5. SEVERAL PAPERS ALSO THREW VERBAL BRICKBATS AT MRS. GANDHI FOR PROLONGING INDIAN EMERGENCY AND POSTPONING GENERAL ELECTIONS. MUCH CRITICISM OF MRS. GANDHI'S

ANTI-DEMOCRATIC MOVES HAS CROPPED UP FROM TIME TO TIME IN PRESS OVER PAST SIX MONTHS (IN SOME INSTANCES IT IS ACTUALLY VEILED CRITICISM OF SIMILAR ANTI-DEMOCRATIC MOVES IN THIS COUNTRY) AND ITS RECURRENCE AT THIS TIME WAS TO BE EXPECTED.
BYROADE

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